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ABSTRACT

In language learning, one important prerequisite for successful imitation of the native speaker is full awareness of his linguistic behavior and, if possible, its analysis. Brief language immersion and brief periods of conversation in the target language do not provide enough opportunity to observe the native speakers' linguistic peculiarities and conversational techniques. Second language instruction in German should include conscious analysis of specific aspects of the target spoken language before extensive exposure to native speakers. A thorough knowledge of these linguistic phenomena would contribute significantly to achieving communicative competence, make exposure to native speech more productive, and ensure that students can cope with the social factors inherent in spoken language usage. (MSE)

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AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF SPOKEN GERMAN

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In teaching foreign languages it is often assumed that for each target language there is one particular standard which should be the central subject of the instruction programme. If we apply this assumption to ourselves and attempt to pinpoint what is at the centre of our language teaching, it will not be difficult, in most cases, for us to define the German language as something uniform, standardized and binding: we see the grammar in the background, the lexicon, a solid framework of rules, a more or less strictly fixed structure which tells us something about potential linguistic usages in German.

This kind of view of the language is of a practical nature and, therefore surely fundamental to the study of the German language in a foreign country. However, it is a view which has been questioned by the findings of sociolinguistics, and from these findings we know that linguistic behaviour is partially determined by social factors. That means language is not the product of the abstract grammatical system but of the actual usage of individuals and of whole social groups in particular everyday situations. Since this actual language usage embraces a great variety of forms, a large number of different standards can also be expected.

Learning to recognize and becoming familiar with these different standards should be something which is encouraged as actively as possible, when the aim is to learn a language as a native language. For in that learning situation it is of central importance for social varieties in language to be grasped.

However, in studying German as a foreign language in a non-German-speaking country, the aims must necessarily be different. In this case, for various reasons, and particularly because of the time factor, reduction and selection are imperative. That the decisions taken during this process have to be predominantly in favour of uniform grammatical norms, and therefore in favour of the written language, is undisputedly the case.

However, somewhat less undisputed is the view that the standards and structures of the written language can then be transferred more or less in their entirety to all other forms of the language, in particular to the spoken form, and thus that there is no important difference between spoken and written. It would follow that the spoken performance can be assessed using criteria applied to the written language. This assessment sometimes even leads to the conclusion that the spoken language is less complete in its forms and structures than the written language, that it is often incorrect and inconsistent.

In view of the differing patterns involved in the production of spoken and written language, this kind of naive or superficial equation of the two language forms seems unjustified, especially if we are interested in the general spoken language of everyday life. This language is used among friends and for everyday matters of all kinds, and a typical feature of it is its spontaneity. I should like to refer shortly, for the sake of comparison, to some of the differences underlying the two language forms.[1]

1. Firstly, it may be stated that while speaking is usually an activity which is not perceived as work, writing is generally considered an activity with clearly work-like characteristics. Writing presupposes a certain amount of systematic planning, it is deliberate, it requires conscious attention and we feel tied to the task of writing. It therefore results in tiredness much more quickly than speaking.

2. Secondly, there are fundamental differences in the relations between the thought process and its realization in language. For speaking, we develop our thoughts successively during the speech process, concentrating our memory and our attention mainly on the topic of the speech. This means severe limitation on the control of speech formulation, which has an adverse effect on the speech performance, be this in the form of errors, repetition, hesitation. And once the speaker has uttered something, it cannot be erased. The spoken utterance at any one moment is fixed and can only be cancelled by a subsequent newly formulated additional utterance. Thus two contradictory expressions can follow each other, one of which would be eliminated if the utterance were written down. This results in redundancy in the spoken language whose most obvious characteristic is that it needs very many more words than the written version of comparable information. In the case of writing, on the other hand, the detailed development of ideas before they are written down enables us to formulate our language very carefully. When writing, we can easily reconsider our product and subsequently check it, and this means that errors are minimized. Concentration and complicated structures in linguistic formulation are thus possible in the written language. This results in a high information content of sentences and an accelerated communication flow.

3. A further difference worth mentioning concerns the great importance of intonation for the syntactic patterning of the spoken language. By means of intonation - and also, of course, of stress - components of an utterance which have a particular logical or emotional function can be accentuated. Any section of the utterance can be given the character of a sentence by means of intonation. We can say that the syntactic function of intonation in spoken language is so important, that the function of other means of syntactic structuring is severely limited. In addition, intonation also plays an important part in the non-syntactic area. In conjunction with speed, volume and rhythm of speech, it provides further information on the content of the utterance and on the personality of the speaker, for example. Since coding in the written language is by means of optical signals, the intonation has to be put into writing. Substitute symbols for intonation are punctuation, underlining, typographical aids and layout structure of the written text. But

these are still very limited and incomplete substitutes. For this reason, other syntactic tools are given far greater importance than in the spoken language; particularly word position, sentence construction, use of inflected forms and particular types of word, such as conjunctions. It is also lexical aids which have to take on the above-mentioned emotional functions of intonation in the written language.

4. A fourth distinguishing feature of spoken, in contrast to written, language is the use of extra-linguistic means of communication - aspects such as mimicry, gesticulation and speech situation. These aid the spoken language since they themselves have a communicative function and therefore many things can remain unsaid. The unimportant and the obvious can be dispensed with and the listener easily understands such statements in spite of their linguistic incompleteness, because he can instinctively complete them using extra-linguistic aids. The proportion of extra-linguistic communication aids in the written language is extremely small. Really, only the common situation of writer and reader can take on a communicative function. Otherwise, the communication is exclusively based on the primary linguistic means of communication, which should therefore be all the more detailed and unambiguous.

On the basis of the above points on the differing conditions under which spoken and written language are produced, it can be seen that the difference between speaking and writing is obvious, and that language can be divided into a spoken and a written version. Whether or not this two-way division should be promoted as a fundamental classification principle for the German language is not relevant here. What is important is that differences of sufficient magnitude exist, and that a discussion of these differences perhaps ought to be included in timetables and lecture courses.

It could be claimed that the differing structures of the two language forms are not denied and are, in fact, completely recognized by the inclusion in language courses of a period spent abroad in a German-speaking country; the work on the spoken language during this period abroad is so intensive that a good grasp of its peculiar characteristics, as contrasted with the written language, is guaranteed. To a certain extent, this is a valid point. There is no doubt that when students return from abroad they show clear improvements in their choice of linguistic expression, a more versatile use of language and greatly increased fluency, in addition to significant advances in personal maturity and a deeper understanding of the political, economic and social situation in the country visited.

However, it must be said that in the case of many students, this progress is not accompanied by the acquisition of or an improvement in the use of typical forms of spontaneous spoken German. There is much more likely to be an improvement in producing speech which is oriented towards the norms and strategies of the written language, speech which seems too perfect, stiff and ponderous in the spontaneous everyday situation, speech which is simply not that which would be used by a native speaker of German. Thus the students speak grammatically correct German in individual situations, but

they do not say what a German would say in the same situation, or what the German listener in that situation expects.

For example, there is a noticeable tendency to attempt the formation of extensive sentences which are as complete and grammatical as possible, when the simplest sentences and bare outlines would really suffice. This perhaps has something to do with the difficult sentence construction of German, which the students have finally mastered. They wish to show this and are therefore not content with half-finished constructions. The students show a tendency, even in the most spontaneous everyday situations, towards presenting the facts in such a way that they would be understandable for someone not directly involved or present in the conversation. However, this is not necessary, since the spoken utterances are only intended for persons who are present and who do not therefore need to have the context described to them in detail.

If we observe what happens when we talk to each other in an everyday situation we can see that only that which is directly relevant is uttered. As has already been mentioned, those involved in the conversation know what they are talking about. They give instructions, ask questions, provide information, argue, etc. The language they use is disjointed and erratic. Sentences are begun but not completed, or the speaker starts in the middle of a sentence. The speaker constantly corrects himself. Even the completed sentences are short and simple, coordination is predominant over subordination. It is often sufficient to use individual words and phrases, clichés and stereotype repetitions, surrounded by a large number of particles, accompanied by a gesture or a particular facial expression. This type of language is widespread and is spoken by everyone to some degree. It is understood because it is used in a definite situation in which it is unambiguous. Situation and language complement each other and belong inseparably together.

It is important to find the reasons why the admittedly considerable improvement in the fluency of students during the time abroad is so clearly biased towards written-language forms, and why so little of the very widespread manner of speaking in spontaneous, colloquial situations is absorbed. It can surely be assumed that the students have experienced this typical spoken language, more precisely, this link between speech and situation, every day while abroad and that they also use this language form themselves in the familiar English situation.

A personal anecdote may provide some progress towards an answer here: some time ago I happened to see one of the Muppet Shows on television. The guest star on that occasion was an American film actor and comedian called James Coco. Before watching that particular show I had never heard of this man or seen him in films. I didn't know his work, I didn't know of his existence. Now all that has changed. After seeing him on the Muppet Show I seemed to notice his name on almost every film poster. He seemed to be in almost all the films on television and people seemed to write a lot about him in the newspapers. Suddenly, James Coco was everywhere.

It is obvious that since my reading habits and my life-style hadn't changed, I must have seen or heard James Coco's name mentioned, or even seen him in films, just as much **before** that Muppet Show. But why did he only register with me afterwards? Obviously, once I was aware of the name and the context in which to expect it, namely show business, I noticed it because I was prepared for it. As numerous experiments in the psychology of perception have confirmed, the perceptual threshold is lowest for meaningful and familiar material in known contexts. The less meaningful or the less familiar some visual or auditory input is, the longer it takes to be processed and consciously noticed. This is especially the case when a large number of inputs have to be processed simultaneously.

If this knowledge, which is fairly obvious but possibly underemployed, were to be applied to the learning of spoken German in Germany, there could surely be some prospect of bringing about an improvement. The students' stay abroad is relatively short, given that they have to come to terms with a new environment. They are bombarded by stimuli, i.e., inputs of all kinds from all sides. For example, they have to get used to living in new and foreign surroundings, they have to cope with new people and a new work or study situation, and they are submerged in a foreign language environment. Only a very small number of these new stimuli will be those relevant for improving spontaneous German speech. The chances of these spoken language inputs being noticed and retained in the memory are therefore rather slight, firstly, because they are in competition with a large number of other stimuli, and secondly, because they are relatively unfamiliar or indeed unknown -like James Coco before the Muppet Show - and have to compete with linguistic stimuli which are much more familiar to our students, i.e., those the students know to be relevant to the written language - and precisely those, in my opinion, which now contribute to the undoubted improvement in fluency mentioned earlier.

A contribution could surely be made to the survival of the genuine aspects of spontaneous speech in this 'battle of the stimuli' by making the students aware of those features of spoken German which are unfamiliar to them and which clearly serve to differentiate it from the written language. If the students' time abroad is to be rendered linguistically as productive as possible, then this preparation is surely an indispensable complement to what is generally accepted as the essential ingredient, i.e., adequate exposure to meaningful, natural language over a period of time, allowing development to take its natural course.

It should be self-evident that not all aspects of spontaneous spoken language are accessible to the observer to the same extent or lend themselves to exploitation in preparative or follow-up classes. It will be very difficult, for example, to analyse and deal theoretically with the complexities of spoken syntax, considering the limited time available. It will probably only be possible to make general reference to the chop and change approach when producing spoken language and to the many different types of incomplete sentences. It would obviously be nonsense to encourage students to practise quarter, half or three-quarter sentences in the language laboratory, in

conversation classes or subsequently during their time abroad, for example - that would make the teacher look like a syntactic Professor Higgins in reverse. What is important, however, is to point out that this somewhat erratic way of speaking is wide-spread and is understood because it is employed in a particular situation and is supplemented by that situation and is not poor or bad German. Many people who deal creatively and critically with the German language do not appreciate that spontaneous speech obeys different rules from those obeyed by the written language, and they would postulate that the written language is the ultimate standard. And perhaps this attitude also contributes to the inability of many students to accept and adopt the flexible and spontaneous characteristics of the spoken language.

The following example,[2] which is a translation from Swiss German, provides a good illustration of the interaction of situation and language. An examination of this 'conversation over coffee', its syntactic structures and the degree to which it is understandable, shows that its comprehensibility is in fact extremely minimal due to the numerous abbreviations and omissions of content and form. An explanation of the situation is required if the individual changes of subject are to be followed.

1 A You don't take sugar, do you - not when there are biscuits around.
2 B No, better not.
3 A That's what I thought. And what if there aren't any biscuits left ...
4 B Well then ...
5 A Then you do have sugar in coffee
6 B Yes.
7 A You see!
8 B Fantastic!
9 A It is, isn't it.
10 B Yes.
11 A I would be able to look after you too, if I had to.
12 C Is that your regiment. 22nd Infantry?
13 B Yes, oh, that drove me crazy - some stupid person came up with a camera, just as we arrived.
14 D Did he want to take a picture?
15 B Yes, just took a few pictures.
16 B Ooh! Oh dear!!
17 E Missed!
18 D Ooh!
19 A Hey, what are you up to?
20 C Quick, get a cloth! Or else get the dog up here.
21 A Yes, that's just we need, the dog on the table.
22 D That won't work.
23 A You're not getting any.
24 B No, that's no good.
25 E That's hopeless.

For a full understanding of the text we would have to know who the participants are and what relationships exist between them. For example, in order to understand the contribution of the word 'too' in line 11 we would have to know that B is A's son-in-'law, and that A is quite fond of him; too therefore means: like your wife (C), my daughter. For an understanding of lines 12-15 we should know that C is looking at a local newspaper with photographs of a military parade in which B participated without too much enthusiasm. For an understanding of lines 16-19 we would have to know that B spilt some milk. For an understanding of lines 20 and 21 we would have to know that the dog has just started to lick the milk that went on the floor and would obviously do an equally good job on the table. And for an understanding of lines 22-25 we would have to know that B is trying to remove the spilt milk from the table with the aid of a spoon.

But it would be an exaggeration to claim that the syntax of the spoken language deviates totally from that of the written language and that speakers only seldom succeed in completing a sentence they have begun. On the contrary, the students can be shown examples which show that long-drawn-out sentences with many subordinate clauses can also play a part in spontaneous speech. The next example illustrates a sentence of this kind, which is very typical for the successive development of thoughts during speaking. The first thought stimulates the speaker to make further additions so that one thought merges organically into the next. A typical phenomenon in this example is how the development of a line of thought distracts from the formulation which doesn't quite come off.

Wir sind ja Fachschüler und haben dann andere Ferien als die Studenten
weil wir - weil die Fachschule sich umstellt auf den Rhythmus der anderen - der Gymnasien und der eben - der normalen Schule
damit die
die abgehen das eine Jahr Praktikum machen können und dann keinen Verlust haben
weil wir erst im März anfangen
oder zu wenig Praktikum haben
damit das ein guter Übergang ist
werden - stellen wir uns über - auch auf Ostern Weihnachten um.

In such situations it can also happen - and we are probably all familiar with this from our own experience - that the speaker cannot think of the final word or phrase at the end of a complicated utterance, and the missing elements are then supplied by the attentive listener. It often seems in these situations as if the listener has a greater lexical choice at his disposal than the speaker, who becomes 'bogged down' in his own formulation.

More typical than such a long-winded style, however, is the use of short sentences which are often incomplete and which are linked together in various ways to form an utterance, the commonest method of linkage being

coordination and by far the most predominantly used conjunction being und. The next example illustrates this. In this text the speaker is telling a friend how to get his car through the TÜV, the German equivalent of the British MOT.

> Das ist überhaupt kein Problem. Sie fahren rein, stellen Ihren Wagen ab und gehn in das Häuschen, wo die Kasse ist, und geben Ihren Kraftfahrzeugbrief ab und bezahlen zehn Mark. Und dann können Sie sich wieder in Ihren Wagen setzen und warten, bis Sie aufgerufen werden. Und dann kriegen Sie alles gesagt, Blinker raus, Fernlicht an und das andere Licht, ach, ganz automatisch. Und dann wird noch unten bißchen nachgeguckt, ob da nichts verrostet ist, der ganze Wagen in Ordnung ist, und dann kommt er rein zu Ihnen, der Prüfer, die sind sehr nett, fahren 'ne Ehrenrunde mit dem, dann kommen Sie wieder an der Kasse vorbei, kriegen Ihren Stempel druff, und alles ist erledigt. Fünf bis sieben Minuten, doch keine Arbeit und angenehm!

Apart from the typical coordination in this text characteristically incomplete sentences can also be observed: der ganze Wagen in Ordnung ist, fahren 'ne Ehrenrunde mit dem, kriegen Ihren Stempel druff, Fünf bis sieben Minuten, doch keine Arbeit, angenehm!

There are various possible extensions of und in spoken German, among them und nun, und zwar, und dann, und da, und nachher, und jedenfalls, und seitdem. Da, also da, and dann are sometimes used without und. Other coordinating conjunctions, however, such as aber, oder, denn, sondern are used considerably less frequently.

Subordination is somewhat more varied in form than coordination, although here, too, we find a particular favourite: the conjunction daß. In subordinate clauses we can observe a tendency towards retaining the word order of the main clause, with which we are most familiar, i.e. subject, predicate, object where there should really be inversion. This is presumably a sign of economy in the spoken language and is most successfully used in clauses beginning with weil. Man spricht heute so, weil man kennt es gar nicht mehr anders.

A justification for this may perhaps be seen in the fact that the conjunction denn has always required this word order: Man spricht heute so, denn man kennt es gar nicht mehr anders. But this justification is not necessary, since the trend is far more extensive. In relative clauses, for example: Ich habe meiner Mutter einen Brief geschrieben, der kam zurück. Es gibt Leute, die sprechen mit einer ganz komischen Wortstellung. This tendency to retain the preferred word order also leads to the conjunction daß being dispensed with after verbs and nouns of saying and thinking. Instead of saying: Er sagte, daß er um 7 Uhr kommen würde. people say: Er sagte, er kommt um 7. It should be mentiond that the subjunctive, obligatory for the written language, is also missing here. This word order can also be found in main clauses: Tatsächlich,

so sprechen wir heute. Freilich, das ist alles viel ökonomischer. Und sicher, das ist kein Unglück.

A typically differential aspect of spoken language which can be isolated and made accessible more easily for theoretical study than syntactic patterns is the wide-spread use of stereotype elements, of formulae and set phrases. These elements are independent of the factual content of an utterance and they are syntactically unconnected with it. Their main use is on the one hand to control the change-over from one speaker to another and on the other to structure the actual utterances of individual speakers. Because of this text-structuring function of the stereotype elements they can be called structuring signals. Without them, optimal communication could not be achieved. Structuring signals are most liberally employed in spontaneous dialogue situations and are almost totally absent in well-prepared monologues like public speeches or lectures.

The structuring signals may be taken as a uniform functional group, although traditional grammar categorizes them in many different ways: as short sentences, interjections, conjunctions and adverbs; there are also lexically undefinable items such as oh, ah, hm (sometimes called hesitation phenomena), as well as non-vocal features like gestures and mimicry.

In the spontaneous situation these elements are used in an attempt to interrupt the current speaker and to take over the role of speaker. The rules for this kind of take-over vary with the degree of spontaneity. In more formal situations the practice would be to wait until the current speaker has finished his or her utterance, or, at least, has completed one particular thought or point. In more spontaneous situations such considerations will play a less prominent part and the participants do not necessarily wait for a suitable and relevant place at which to interrupt.

Linguistic means to gain the role of speaker could firstly be very explicit phrases such as: ich wo'lte sagen, darf ich auch mal was sagen, wenn ich schnell mal unterbrechen darf, darf ich hier mal einhaken, ich würde meinen, ich meine, paß auf, ja hör mal, etc. English examples would be: can I just say something, can I just interrupt for a minute, can I just add something here, I would say, well I think, just a minute, yes but listen, etc.

Then there are individual lexical items like: ja, aber, also, ach, natürlich or various combinations of these. English uses yes, but, well, of course, anyway, well then, etc.

The next example illustrates the use of these signa's with which the listener tries to, or actually does, take over the role of speaker:

A **also** mir genügt die Formalität, daß es auf Papier steht, schön also gehört mir nun endlich ja? das genügt mir.
B **ja ... äh ... ja vielleicht aber ... äh ...** meiner
A ich brauch da nich noch großartig eine eine eine Bestätigung von vom

Pastor und so ...

B **nein paß mal auf ... gut ...**

A **äh ... daß sie ... daß sie** mir gehört ja? das das dazu brauch ...

B **ja ... äh ... ja also** die Frau gehört dir das is überhaupt mal die Frage ... also nach deiner vorigen ... äh ... Definition darf die dir die Frau gar nich gehören ...

A **ja ich meine ... ahm ... nein nein also ich versteh das nich.**

Further ways to gain the role of speaker that could be mentioned briefly here are repeatedly beginning with the same word or words while the current speaker is still talking, as was illustrated in the previous example, or the increased use of listener signals such as ja, nein, eben, gut; English right, yeah, no, fine. Also there is the possibility of breaking into the current speaker's speech and continuing or completing it for him.

This is an all too-familiar device employed by those who seem to know what we want to say better than we do ourselves. Paralinguistic means should be mentioned in this context, e.g., audible breathtaking, increased speech volume, i.e., greater loudness during simultaneous speaking with the current speaker and the use of hesitation phenomena äh, ahm, öh in brief gaps left by the current speaker. Lastly there are also non-vocal means that help us to take over the role of speaker, e.g., change in posture, in particular, moving closer to the current speaker, gestures, like the raising of a hand, nodding the head, opening the mouth.

Once the role of speaker has been taken over attempts will be made to retain it and prevent other participants from regaining it. Structuring signals within contributions to the dialogue can be of assistance here. They indicate to the other participants that the speaker has not finished his contribution yet and that he wants to remain in control. Often, these tactically-used signals within the contribution of individual speakers occur at those points in the text where a new section or aspect as regards content begins; where a new subject or a new aspect of the subject is brought into the discussion, or something is to receive particular emphasis. It could therefore be said that the use of structuring signals within a section of the dialogue is motivated by tactical as well as semantic considerations. These signals can occur in the form of explicit sentences and phrases such as: laß mich mal ausreden, würdest du bitte nicht unterbrechen, darf ich das noch schnell zu Ende führen, einen Moment bitte, und noch folgendes, ja und da ist/wäre/war noch folgendes, und dann, außerdem meine ich, etc. English examples would be: just let me finish, can I just finish, I've just got one more thing to say, please don't interrupt, there's just one more thing, one more thing, and then, apart from that there's, if I could just add, etc.

The next example illustrates the use of this type of structuring signal. The example is taken from a school-class discussion with Günter Grass. We can see how one of the pupils develops his own thoughts on the subject under discussion and puts them together step by step with the help of such signals.

Herr Grass, bei Ihrem Inhalt da kommen drei Sachen vor und das eine ist ... äh ... die Beschreibung von ekelhaften Dingen die Beschreibung von sexuellen Dingen und ... äh ... das is n alter Hut und jetzt kommt man vielleicht was Neueres ... äh ... Sie bringen auch sehr viel Blasphemie rein ... und da hab ich ... äh ... jetzt ein Beispiel ... da beschreiben Sie wie ein paar ... äh ... Möwenmist kauen und dazu schreiben sie das Zeug schmeckte nach nichts oder nach Gips oder nach Fischmehl oder nach allem was er sich vorstellte nach Glück Mädchen und nach dem lieben Gott und diese Stelle nach dem lieben Gott möcht ich besonders betonen ... also nach Mädchen und Glück könnte man sich eventuell noch drüber streiten aber ... äh ... aber hier seit wann kann wie wieso kann Möwenmist nach dem lieben Gott schmecken?

An important way to remain in control and also to structure one's own speech is the use of paralinguistic means, in particular hesitation phenomena during gaps in the current utterance. It is well known that unfilled intervals of sufficient length are the points where another participant could come in and take over the role of speaker. Apart from the explicit linguistic elements employed in the previous example, the speaker therefore uses paralinguistic fillers in order to signal to the other participants that he is still in control and does not want to be interrupted, and also to help in the organisation of his utterance.

The type of paralinguistic filler and the actual number used vary from one speaker to another, and more importantly for language teaching, from language to language. The paralinguistic features used in English are different from those used in German. It is also open to question whether the hesitation phenomena occur after the speaker has made a decision about the syntactic structure of his thoughts and before their actual lexical realisation, as often seems to be the case in English. The use of English-type hesitation phenomena in an otherwise faultless German utterence would be non-idiomatic and would betray the fact that the speaker is a foreigner. It follows that students should be aware not only of the linguistic but also of the paralinguistic complexities of spontaneous language.

It is probably fair to say that foreign-language teachers do not spend much time on the paralinguistics of their foreign languages, always in the hope that the time abroad will do the trick. Experience shows that this is not good enough, because few students manage to distance themselves paralinguistically from their native English behaviour. A comparative analysis of paralinguistic aspects in English and in the foreign language could help the students to identify the foreign speaker's speech behaviour and to copy him more successfully; it could also help them to improve their dialogue strategies in the foreign language and make them into more competent conversationalists.

Apart from preventing interruptions, introducing new ideas and generally structuring the speech event, structuring signals are also used to carry out self-correction, as is shown in the next example:

Ja, nun liegen die Sachen ja Gott äh mm leider Gottes so n bißchen eng beieinander. Aber es ist so - wir stel'en uns also wir haben festgestellt, daß wir uns alle immer die Frage stellen: ja, warum soll es nicht anders rum sein?

In line 1, a paralinguistic signal is used to stop and re-start the utterance after the defective realization of the idiomatic phrase leider Gottes. In line 2 the sentence wir stellen uns die Frage is cut short after uns and rephrased with the linguistic signal also as its starter.

Structuring signals are not only used by the speaker but also by the listener, who can indicate with their aid his attention and interest, or lack of them, as well as his agreement or disagreement. The listener can therefore structure the utterance he hears step by step by means of paralinguistic and linguistic symbols in the way that the speaker can. After every new piece of information there can be a listener signal, which structures what is said and gives the speaker the important information that what he says is being received and understood. This feedback information is absolutely vital. It can be very irritating for a speaker, at the very least, if the listener does not cooperate in this way - for whatever reason. By the denial of these signals of confirmation on the part of the listener, the conversation can rapidly dry up, and on the telephone, where these signals are even more important, because of the lack of visual contact, the speaker would ask after only a very short time if the listener can still hear him.

The structuring signals discussed so far all occurred at the beginning of an utterance, or, at least, at the beginning of a section of an utterance. They could therefore be called beginning or opening signals. There are also signals which occur at the end of utterances or parts of utterances and these could be called concluding or closing signals. One function of these signals, which, incidentally, are not used quite as frequently and regularly in German as the opening signals, is to signal the conclusion of individual statements and thereby to divide the whole utterance into sense units. This is perhaps comparable, to a certain extent, with punctuation in the written language. At the same time these closing signals - especially ja and nicht - are used to establish common ground between speaker and listener, both emotionally and factually. With their aid the speaker constantly checks and monitors that the listener is still paying attention, that he understands him and agrees or disagrees with him. The speaker seeks confirmation of what he is saying and attempts to guard against any objections that may be made by anticipating them so that he can challenge them immediately. It is of some sociolinguistic importance that this function of language occurs most frequently among speakers who are uncertain about the adequacy of what they are saying and feel the need to have the constant agreement of the listener. This last point is particularly clearly illustrated in the next example - the speech of a shipyard worker from Hamburg.

Och Gott, hat ja kein Zweck, nicht, kannst ja bei der Politik kannst

sowieso nichts machen, nicht, und Hamburg ist 'ne Weltstadt, nicht, Hauptsache, der Hafen läuft, nicht. Damit wir was zu tun haben, nicht, daß man existenzfähig ist, nicht. Kommst du abends nach Hause, Mutti wartet denn auch, hast 'n paar Bier getrunken, nicht, denn fängt sie das Schimpfen an - noja, bringt man 'n paar Blumen mit, nicht, und denn hat sich das wieder, nicht. Ist wieder alles vergessen, nicht. Jo.

Of course, not all conversations are subdivided by such frequent use of structuring signals as the examples that have been discussed. Very controlled speakers - due perhaps to the situation or possibly to individual linguistic discipline - can manage with very few of these signals, or sometimes even do without them altogether. People obviously speak differently in different situations and are more careful how they express themselves when speaking to certain listeners.

In such situations their speech contains fewer redundant features and thus fewer structuring signals. On the other hand, in less formal situations in which the speaker is more committed to the content of what he is saying, spontaneity, lack of control and redundancy of linguistic expression are all increased. Self-correction and restarted sentences are more frequent because of the difficulty experienced with formulation; as a result more stereotype repetitions and meaningless structuring signals are used.

The function of these redundant forms, the structuring signals, in spoken communication is determined by the unique nature of the spoken text. The written text can be re-read, we can turn back at any time and check how the writer has expressed himself. Not so with the spoken language. Without structuring signals the spoken text would represent an almost unbroken continuum, especially in the case of lively speakers, and would demand the listener's constant and undivided attention. This is very difficult to maintain, because outward interference and inward parallel thinking usually distract part of the listener's attention. Signals of confirmation from the listener let the speaker know that what he has said has been understood. Structuring signals, which subdivide dialogues and monologues in their characteristic way, make it easier for the listener to follow what is being said. The fact that these signals are redundant does not matter. Since the danger of information losses in spoken communication is much greater, the redundancy has to be far more frequent.

Redundancy in genuine spontaneous speech is further increased by repetition; the repetition of words, parts of sentences or even whole sentences in a slightly modified form. And it is not necessary for the unit which is repeated to represent the central topic or to be of particularly great semantic importance, as is made clear in the next example, an excerpt from a sermon, by the repetition of the word Geschichte.

Die Geschichte wird uns einmal ausgeführt in einer anderen Geschichte - wißt ihr zufällig in welcher Geschichte wo der Mensch Gott gleich

sein wollte? Im Turmbau zu Babel und bitte lesen Sie die Geschichte mal und denken Sie mal an die Geschichte unseres deutschen Volkes, des großdeutschen Reiches vor 30 Jahren.

The next example illustrates the repetition of whole sentences:

Und dann stehn die beiden so am Schiff und dann nimmt der eine dem andern seine Mütze vom Kopf und schmeißt sie ins Wasser. Was macht der andre der nimmt dem seine Mütze vom Kopf und schmeißt sie auch ins Wasser. Die beiden gucken sich an da sagt der andre hol die Mütze wieder raus sonst gibt es ein Unglück. Und faßt ihn bei den Beinen mit dem Kopf ins Wasser und er muß die Mütze wieder rausholen. Nun haben sie beide Mützen wieder heraus setzen sie sich auf den Kopf nun natürlich total naß das Wasser läuft ihnen an'n Ohren hinunter. Und dasselbe passiert nochmal wieder. Und da nimmt der eine die Mütze und wirft sie weit weg in die Elbe hinein und der andere nimmt dann dem andern seine Mütze und ebenfalls.

The frequent use of recurrent units in speaking is in marked contrast to the usages of the written language. There, the obligation to vary and the reluctance to repeat constitute one of the first commandments. This is already emphasized so strongly in essay-writing lessons at school that hardly anyone writing in later life can exempt himself from it. Instead of continuously saying: er sagte, er sagte, we write er begann, er sprach, er redete, er erwiderte, er stotterte, er plauderte, er lispelte, er tuschelte, and so on. In the case of other word clauses, the same variation approach applies, or we often use deictic pronouns to refer to them.

The frequent use of recurrent units in spontaneous speech facilitates both speaking and listening. Instead of continually having to seek new variations, the speaker can concentrate on his thoughts and in translating them into language he can employ the same formulation for dealing with the same or very similar subject matter. Due to the recurrent units the spoken language gains considerably in length and these units contribute to a large extent towards the redundancy of speaking. Both factors seem to be an advantage for the listener: he can stay 'on the ball' even without paying very much attention.

With reference to redundancy mention should be made of the empty phrases and standard formulae which are employed in such great numbers in spontaneous speech, and whose use is often not satisfactorily mastered, even by advanced speakers. These phrases serve to slow down the rate of information flow and ensure the speaker some time in which decisions can be taken during the process of thinking and formulating. Examples are:

glaub' ich, würd' ich sagen, sagen wir mal, wie man sagt, wie wir so

sagen, wie man so schön sagt, ehrlich gesagt, auf gut Deutsch gesagt, ich meine, mein' ich doch, und so weiter, oder sowas, oder so, na kurz und gut, wie das so ist, wie heißt das jetzt, etc.

English would use expressions like: so to speak, sort of, kind of, like, to put it another way, in other words, how shall I say, to put it in plain English, quite frankly, etc. It is typical that some speakers - very much to the annoyance of other participants in the conversation - often have favourite phrases which they are fond of using frequently. However, among the above examples there are a number of expressions which go beyond individual usage.

From redundancy in the form of recurrent units and empty phrases it is only a small step to well-worn clichés and trendy expressions. Examples are:

muß ja nicht sein, wenn man so will, schlapp machen, den Segen haben, von wegen, und ob, na und, alles was recht ist, daß ich nicht lache, was soll's, wird schon werden, das darf doch nicht wahr sein, etc.

English examples would be:

we'll see, didn't I half, it'll turn out alright in the end, que sera sera, you don't say, you must be joking, pull the other one, that's just it, at the end of the day, you've got another think coming, etc.

It can be seen again here that certain clichés are favoured by individual speakers, while others are used more generally. The question, too, of whether an expression is in fact fixed and has become a cliché which intrudes almost unintentionally into their speech, will be answered differently by different speakers.

The discussion of clichés and trendy expressions approaches the general area of slang. The spoken German language is particularly creative in this area and is constantly producing new material. Such material is all the more interesting for advanced language teaching because it is typical for the language spoken by the German contemporaries and friends of the majority of students. Without some knowledge of the patterns of slang formation there could therefore be some difficulties in comprehension and in assessment of the nature of certain conversations. The following list gives a series of currently used slang expressions in a number of selected semantic areas:

Semantic area	Slangy expressions currently in use
das ist gut ausgezeichnet, toll	das ist: geil, fetzig, fetzend, prickelnd, ätzend, tierisch, tierisch gut, geil, supergeil, affengeil, oberaffengeil, irre, stark, echt stark, hart, das ist die Härte,

	das ist glatter Wahnsinn das kommt gut hier ist die Molly los
gute Musik	geile Lala, geile Musi
ich habe Lust auf	ich habe Bock auf ich hab' jetzt echt Böcke auf ich habe Trieb auf
ich habe keine Lust	ich hab' jetzt kein'n Bock auf ich hab' Nullbock ich habe keinen Druck auf der Materie das is echt ungeil
hier ist nichts los	hier ist der Arsch ab hier ist der Arsch verfroren das is 'ne tote Hose
geh weg, hau ab	zieh Leine, verpiß dich, kneif' ab, verzieh dich, mach Mücke mach Flatter mach Rakete mach Abflug
ich glaub' ich spinne	da schnallst de ab (ältere Form) da packst de dich in die Hose ich glaub' mein Schwein pfeift ich glaub' mein Hamster bohnert ich glaub' mich streift'n Bus ich glaub' mich knutscht'n Elch ich glaub' die Russen kommen da kriegst du se nich mehr alle ich glaub's geht los
ich glaub' du	ich glaube du hast 'n Dachschaden (ältere spinnst Form) ich glaube du hast 'ne Schraube locker (ältere Form) Ich glaube du hast nicht mehr alle Tassen im Schrank (ältere Form) ich glaube du hast den Schoß offen ich glaube du hast ein Loch in der Pupille ich glaube du hast einen Knick in der Antenne ich glaube du hast einen Riß im Giebel ich glaube dich hamse gebissen ich glaub dir hamse Sand ins Hirn gestreut hasse macke? haste Rad ab? ich glaub' du hast n Ratsch ab

As can be seen immediately from this list, it is characteristic here that these expressions can be far-fetched and sometimes provocative. This is typical of

young people who are protesting not only against social boredom, but also against linguistic monotony. They operate with images where ordinary language only uses straightforward symbols. However, it is often the case that the unusual aspects of this type of language are relatively quickly worn out, so that they become clichés. This is no different than with fashion, because if something is fashionable it is shown off everywhere and at every opportunity - and precisely because of this, it is very rapidly out of fashion again and new creations must be thought of to replace it.

In general, it can be said that clichés in spontaneous speech fulfil a similar function to that of the recurrent units: they are ready to be called upon and save the speaker having to think of the appropriate word for a particular position in a sentence. Unconscious linguistic economy is thus at work again here. The semantic imprecision associated with the cliché is unimportant, since the listener and speaker from the same linguistic background will interpret it in the same way.

There are a large number of further typical aspects of spontaneous speech, which could be introduced in class as material to sharpen the students' awareness of such features and to promote increased use of them in actual conversations. It is particularly useful to refer to the frequent use of the modal particles which serve to differentiate the spoken language from the written one with such clarity, and which gain additional relevance in that no English particles can be found which are the same as the German ones or which have a similar semantic and pragmatic structure.

Examples of German modal particles are: aber, ja, vielleicht, nur, bloß, doch, eben, auch, denn, eigentlich, etwa, mal, schon, nun. It is typical of these little words that when they are used as modal particles, they do not have any definable meaning of their own, they do no contribute anything to the factual content of a sentence and can therefore be omitted without any change in the truth value of the sentence. The modal particles do not clarify what the speaker says, but why he says it, how he feels about the content of his utterances, how much he presumes is already known about the subject under discussion, how he wants to influence the listener, and so on. The following three sentences, for example, show how the speaker anticipates the reaction of the listener with the aid of the modal particles and makes clear which reaction he would prefer:

Verwendest du Modalpartikeln? (reaction not specified)
Verwendest du **auch** Modalpartikeln? (positive reaction expected)
Verwendest du **etwa** Modalpartikeln? (negative reation expected)

It is a typical phenomenon in the case of the modal particles in spontaneous language that they are used in combination. Mach ruhig das Fenster zu! can become Mach eben vielleicht schon mal ruhig das Fenster zu! It is not always easy to say to what extent different possib'e particle combinations modify the nuances of meaning of an utterance. Certainly, accent, intonation and

position of the particle in the sentence all play important parts. However, it can be said overall that the use of the modal particles and, especially, of a whole succession of them also makes a typical contribution to redundancy in the spoken language.

One of the many functions of German modal particles is to express the speaker's wish to be in agreement with the listener. A certain amount of agreement, or, at least, common interest are essential for a productive exchange of view between speaker and listener. Without at least partially coinciding views it is not possible for us to converse. Because of this, the speaker is always concerned to stress common interests and to produce agreement, or to make sure that these exist.

The modal particle ja in the next three examples is used either to refer to a known fact or to present the content of an utterance as a known fact. The speaker assumes that a particular set of facts is known to or is obvious to the listener but explicitly mentions them to ensure that they have not been forgotten, since they are essential to the continuation of the communication; something that is required for the present argumentation is recalled to mind. English has to resort to explicit means to render the meaning of German ja and literally spells out what its contribution is.

Ich schick' Dir das Geld an Deine Geschäftsadresse. Die hab' ich ja.

I'll send the money to your business address. I've got it, you know

Lieb von Dir, daß Du mir hilfst. Du siehst ja, ich kann mit der rechten Hand überhaupt nicht.

Nice of you to help me. As you see, I can't do anything with my right hand.

Stimmt, der Fernseher war schon teuer. Aber weißt du, wir gehen ja nie aus.

You're right, the television was rather expensive; but then, we never go out, you know.

Mentioning known facts seems to be very widespread. People use non-informative sentences for mutually informing each other of known facts and to call attention to the obvious. Stating the self-evident seems to have the function of reassuring the participants of the unproblematic aspects of their mutual relationship.

Modal particles are also used to express surprise as is illustrated in the next two examples by the use of denn.

A Komm, ich fahr' dich heim.

B Hast du **denn** einen Führerschein?

A Come on, I'll drive you home.

B **You mean to say** you've got a driving licence?
I didn't know you'd got a driving licence.

A Diese Unfallrechnung macht mir schwer zu schaffen.

B Wieso? Bist du **denn** nicht versichert?

A The bill for this accident is making things very difficult for me.

B Why's that? Haven't you got an insurance?

.....? **Don't tell me** you're not insured!
.....? **Don't say** you haven't got an insurance.
.....? **You mean to say** you're not insured?

The surprise expressed in these sentences is based on a discrepancy between a certain expectation and the facts deduced from the situation or from the previous sentence. In the first of the two situations, for example, the original assumption is that A does not possess a driving licence. From what A says, however, it must seem that he either does possess a licence, or, of course, that he intends to drive illegally. In English this kind of surprise is expressed by introductory phrases like: don't say, I didn't know, don't tell me and by very pronounced intonation, that uses a wide pitch range.

The last examples in this analysis show how a modal particle is used to tone down an utterance, to lessen the impact of a statement.

A Zehn Gramm Schinken?

B Ja bitte. Aber es kann **ruhig** etwas mehr sein.

A Ten grams of bacon?

B Yes please, but **it doesn't really matter** if it's a bit more.
Yes please, but **it's alright** if it's over.

Die Heringe könnten **ruhig** etwas pikanter gewürzt sein.

It wouldn't do any harm if the herrings were a bit more highly seasoned.
A bit more seasoning **wouldn't do** the herrings any harm.

By the use of the modal particle ruhig the speaker can imply that there is no reason to worry about a particular action, that there is nothing to prevent a certain action, that it wouldn't really matter if things were slightly different from the way they are at the moment. Apart from relying on the versatile

function of intonation, English makes very explicit what the German particle stands for by using phrases like doesn't really matter, it's alright, it wouldn't do any harm.

Obviously, many more examples could be given to show how modal particles can be used by the German speaker to express his attitudes, his feelings and emotions. However, the above is sufficient to illustrate what kind of material can be presented to students and in what way the function of the modal particles in spoken German, together with their English counterparts can be discussed.

It seems absolutely essential that students receive more intensified instruction in the use of the modal particles in spoken German. If they are to speak appropriately in a given situation, they require knowledge about how the speaker correctly expresses his own attitude towards that situation and his expectations of it. This becomes clear if one imagines a situation in which somebody politely invites a visitor standing outside the door to come in, not with the words: Komm ruhig rein! but with the words: Komm bloß rein! The ability to use modes of expression revealing the attitude of the speaker is an essential part of the communicative competence of the native speaker, and must therefore also be the aim of those foreign speakers who wish to imitate this competence as closely as possible.

In the language learning context one important prerequisite for the successful imitation of the native speaker is full awareness of his linguistic behaviour and, if possible, its analysis. This applies to the spoken language as a whole. Because of the relatively advanced age of students for language acquisition, because of the relatively short time spent abroad and because of the interference from the written language, it is probably unlikely in many cases, that the linguistic immersion abroad will achieve near-native spoken competence.

We know from own experience that in conversation it is only seldom possible, and then for only short periods, that we are successful in observing the linguistic peculiarities and the conversational techniques of the other participants. If we were to do this we should be bad conversationalists and could probably expect to be called to order continuously for not paying attention, and not following the topic under discussion, but, instead, concentrating on the structure of what was being said. This state of affairs justifies conscious and analytical study of special aspects of the spoken language.

A thorough knowledge of such selected linguistic phenomena as were discussed in this paper could form a significant contribution to the achievement of communicative competence, and, because this increases the awareness of certain aspects of spoken German, periods spent by students in German-speaking countries could be made considerably more productive as far as learning the language is concerned. In this way it might be ensured that students can meet the changing social and industrial requirements of the present day, where the spoken language is becoming increasingly important.

However, apart from the practical benefits which can be obtained from such analytical study there is another, not unimportant advantage in it, which has application to the understanding of the present-day German language as a whole. Research on the German language has shown that the written German language is nowadays influenced by the colloquial language to an extent which was previously unknown. Even if not all the characteristics of the present linguistic changes can be explained by concessions to the colloquial language, these do play an essential part. According to Hans Eggers this is manifested syntactically in a tendency towards shorter sentences, towards simple sentences, towards coordination; on the lexical side we find many colloquialisms and expressions from everyday speech; particles are widely used; one particular morphological feature to be observed is the use of prepositional phrases, which is also typical for English, and, in conjunction with this, a certain amount of reduction in the use of cases.

In view of these already many-sided influences on the written language it could perhaps be suggested that in order to understand it fully, much closer study of the spoken language will be essential in the future. Then the spoken language would receive the amount of attention it really deserves.

NOTES

1. For more on this see: Christel Leska, Vergleichende Untersuchungen zur Frequenz und Distribution syntaktischer Erscheinungen gesprochener und geschriebener Sprache - durchgeführt an Texten deutscher Gebrauchssprache der Gegenwart, Dissertation (Leipzig, 1966).

2. The examples given are based on the following:

   Ausdrucksweisen der Sprechereinstellung im Deutschen und Englischen by Wolfram Bublitz (Tübingen, 1978).

   Texte gesprochener deutscher Standardsprache, erarbeitet im Institut für deutsche Sprache (München/Düsseldorf)

   Zu einer Typologie des spontanen Gesprächs by Heinz Zimmermann (Bern, 1963).

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